PRESS RELEASE

Tbilisi, Georgia, 17-20 September 2013

Environmental Management Plan International Training

under

The EU and FAO partnership project
"Improved pesticides and chemicals management in the Former Soviet Union"

From 17 to 20 September, FAO will hold a training on development of environmental management plans for environmentally sound management of obsolete pesticides in Tbilisi, Georgia. The training will be immediately followed by a meeting of the Programme Technical Committee (PTC) to assess progress in implementation and to start preparations for the second annual Steering Committee meeting to be held in Kiev November 11 and 12. The training and PTC meeting will be attended by representatives from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Ukraine as well as representatives of programme partners including Milieukontakt International, Green Cross, and IHPA. The participation of representatives from Georgia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan will be supported by the UNEP project "Demonstrating and Scaling-up of Sustainable Alternatives to DDT in Vector Management Global Programme". Both projects aim to reduce the risk from obsolete pesticides on public health and the environment in the former Soviet Union.

The training aims to strengthen the capacity of governmental specialists in the development of plans to reduce risks from hazardous materials such as obsolete pesticides and persistent organic pollutants (POPs). During the training participants will learn and work on an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) for the environmentally sound management of obsolete pesticides and associated wastes based on work already completed on identification of pesticide / POPs storage and burial sites. The EMP provides the base for a country to decide on risks, priorities, strategies and approaches to deal with its stocks of obsolete pesticides. It is expected that during and after the training participants will be preparing their country's Environmental Management Plan.

Since early 2012 the twelve countries in European Neighborhood, Central Asia and the Russian Federation have been working with FA0 to develop capacity to better manage their vast stocks of obsolete pesticides and POPs. The programme is funded by the EC Europe Aid and implemented by FAO in partnership with a range of development partners including international NGOs (Milieukontakt International, Green Cross, and the International HCH and Pesticide Association), UN Agencies (WHO, UNEP, UNDP, the Secretariats of the Convention of Rotterdam, Stockholm and Basel) the Global Environment Facility, International Financial Institutions, bi-lateral donors and the private sector. For the next three years, the EU and FAO will invest €7 million to assist these countries and to foster an environment of cooperation and capacity development aimed at developing a sustainable solution of the project facing these countries. It is estimated that over 200,000 metric tons of these hazardous chemicals exist in the region and a concerted international effort is needed now to prevent contamination of water and soil used for production of food. At the same time, the project will build capacity to reduce risks from pesticides used in agriculture and avoid build-up of additional stockpiles in future.

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